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THE HYPHEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY



An Address Delivered at Johnstown, Pa.,
August 31, 1916, on German Day

By George Seibel

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GERMANY AND AMERICA

By George Seibel



In German forests Liberty was born—
There Armin overthrew the boast of Rome;
There Truth and Beauty found another home,
When from the holy soil of Hellas torn;
There was the badge of Courage humbly worn,
There Faith hath reared aloft her proudest dome;
While Song rose radiant from her fountains' foam,
Hypocrisy fell blasted by her scorn.

America, thou art the heir of all
The toil and dream, the glory and the song!
Her sons have died for thee in many wars—
And canst thou like a stranger see her fall,
Or lend a hand in that eternal wrong
To blot this blazing splendor from the stars?



THE HYPHEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY

By **GEORGE SEIBEL**

Editor Pittsburgh "Volksblatt & Freiheits Freund."

DURING the past two years a new disease has made its appearance in the United States, a malignant malady which no one had ever suspected before. It originated in something that seems to be harmless enough—a mere mark of punctuation. Of course, those who are familiar with the history of medicine have heard of the dangerous comma bacillus, discovered by Doctor Koch. He had some idea of the perils which lurked in the printer's case, yet even he couldn't have realized what a dire menace was hid in the seemingly innocuous hyphen. It remained for a famous Doctor from Princeton to discover this, and his horrifying discovery was verified by the researches of another wise man—the peerless navigator of the River of Doubt, the eminent founder of the Ananias Club, the mighty hunter of the Whiskered Bird, the discoverer of the Ten Commandments, the modern Diogenes, who is rushing up and down the land, searching for an honest man, not with a lantern but a looking-glass.

The hyphen, however, is dangerous only in certain combinations. You may be an Anglo-Saxon, or a British-American, or Scotch-Irish, or a score of other things with hyphens, and the hyphen will be a mark of distinction and a badge of honor. But if you are

a German-American—that is, during the past two years—the hyphen is as dreadful as the brand of Cain. Formerly, when a careless workman smoked a pipe in a powder-factory and was blown up, people said it served him right. Nowadays, when hundreds of careless and unskilled workmen all over the country, raked up from everywhere to manufacture munitions, blow up themselves and the factories where they work eighteen hours a day, the cry is at once raised, “Hunt the Hyphen!”

If somebody with a German name, having heard that an American nurse in Germany died of blood-poisoning because she had no antiseptic rubber gloves, attempts to smuggle some sheet rubber into Germany, he is at once haled before a tribunal for the violation of American neutrality. He or she is bitterly attacked in scurrilous articles on the front page of papers which circulate especially in the circles that year after year swindle the United States Government by smuggling silks and furs from Europe, though they could well afford to pay the duties. But it makes a great deal of difference whether a British-American hyphenate smuggles furs and silks into America, or whether a German-American hyphenate tries to smuggle rubber into Germany. The one is only cheating the American people, but the other is disobeying the British foreign office.

It would take a day to tell you all the horrors and crimes committed by these wicked Hyphens.

Why, do you know that some even had the audacity to say they would not vote for the re-election of President Wilson. They did not care, it seems, how bad the “London Times” might feel if King George’s American Maharajah should be deposed. These wicked Hyphens are utterly devoid

of human sympathy. Some of them even had the temerity to criticise this same President Wilson when he declined to attend the unveiling of a monument to General Nathanael Greene. Who was General Greene? Second in command to George Washington. Who was George Washington? He was a hyphenate of 1776.

Do you know that if you printed extracts today from the writings of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Paine, and their associates, and attempted to smuggle them into Canada or Ireland or India, you would probably be arrested? Why, there is even a little pamphlet written by William Jennings Bryan, to bring which into India would subject a man to being cast into prison.

Sometimes I wish that old Johann Peter Zenger could come back to us. Zenger, a German hyphenate of the year 1733, was the first apostle and martyr of the American free press. He founded the first newspaper in America that tried to tell the truth. The truth, then as now, was unpalatable to the English authorities, so Zenger's paper was ordered to be burned by the hangman, and Zenger was thrown into jail. A trifling inconvenience like that did not scare a man like Zenger. He kept on editing his paper from his cell, giving instructions to the printers through a crack of the door. After years of persecution he established in America the principle of the free press, free until it was again fettered by chains of British gold.

Remember that it was a German-American hyphenate who first secured for America the liberty of the press. The hyphenates have been first in a great many things, their connection with which in our day has almost been forgotten. Above all, they

have always been first in every fight for liberty, in every battle against oppression, in every war for human rights.

Do you know that the first protest against negro slavery voiced on this continent came from Germantown in the year 1688, and the arguments were such that it was impossible to refute them? It took nearly 150 years for the Puritans of New England to catch up with the humane idealism of Franz Daniel Pastorius and his comrades, whom the poet Whittier has called:

“The German-born pilgrims who first dared to brave
The scorn of the proud in the cause of the slave.”

Do you know that the first rebel against British tyranny on this continent was a hyphenate, Jacob Leisler? Just as, two centuries later, the first men on this continent to preach the new economic gospel of Socialism were hyphenated Germans.

Do you know that it was a German newspaper, the “*Staatsbote*,” which first told the people of the Colonies that the Declaration of Independence had been adopted?

Do you know that the first Bible printed in America was printed by the hyphenated Christoph Saur in 1743, forty years before any other Bible was printed in America?

Do you know that fully two hundred years earlier a German hyphenate, Johann Cromberger, had established the first printing office in the new world, in the City of Mexico?

Do you know that the first book on education produced in America was written by Christoph Dock in 1754, and that the first kindergarten was brought over in 1826 by Friedrich Rapp?

Do you know that the first American Encyclo-

pedia was compiled by Francis Lieber in 1828?

Today our greatest Sanscrit scholar is Maurice Bloomfield, our foremost Semitic master is Paul Haupt, our most eminent authority on Chinese is Friedrich Hirth, our best-known Oriental archaeologist is Hermann V. Hilprecht.

The things of the mind and the spirit were always their first concern, but the German Pilgrims have been no less conspicuous as pioneers in the fields of industry and commerce.

Do you know that Wilhelm Rittenhaus in 1690 erected the first paper mill in America?

Do you know that Thomas Ruettter in 1716 founded the first iron-works in Pennsylvania?

Do you know that another German, Kaspar Wuester, in 1738, founded the first glass-factory in America?

Do you know that a hyphenated Pennsylvania Dutchman, Thomas Leiper, in 1806, constructed the first railroad in America?

Do you know that a German built the first steam-boat that plowed our western waters, and another German as her captain made the first trip from Pittsburgh to New Orleans?

Do you know that the first suspension bridge was flung, a hyphen of steel, across an American river by the hyphenated Johann August Roebling, as if he wished to impress upon the world the fact that the hyphen unites, it does not separate?

Do you know that a hyphenated German-American is "the foremost electrical engineer of the United States, and therefore of the world"? I am quoting the words of the President of Harvard University in conferring a degree upon Karl P. Steinmetz.

How many of our giant enterprises were founded by these despised hyphenates! I shall name only four. The great United States Steel Corporation sprang from the furnaces of Andreas and Anton Kloman, started about 1850; the family of the man who may be regarded as the father of the modern Department Store, John Wanamaker, was originally known as Wannemacher; the ancestors of the founder of the Standard Oil business were called Roggenfelder; and all over the world, in 57 languages, you will see the praise of the 57 varieties associated with the hyphenated name of Heinz.

Even so in the contiguous realms of beauty and of truth, in the radiant creations of art and the stupendous achievements of science, the Germans in America have done their share and need not be ashamed.

Do you know that the Capitol at Washington, the most majestic structure in the new world, is the work of a German hyphenate? Do you know that the most beautiful building in the new world, the Library of Congress, is also the work of two hyphenated Germans?

Do you know that the two largest telescopes and the two most important observatories in the United States were the gift of two hyphenates, Lick and Yerkes? A German-American, Heinrich Schliemann, dug up the buried grandeur of Greece and raised the mighty men of Homer from the world of shades.

Do you know that Johann Behrent, in 1775, built the first American piano? Do you know that you can't buy an unhyphenated piano worth playing?

The Germans have given us the singing society and the symphony orchestra, two great agencies to uplift and civilize the human family. But in more

utilitarian fields of humanitarian endeavor we also owe to them some of our most admirable institutions. It was a German Barbarian, Henry Bergh, who founded the societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals and children. It was a German Hun, Arthur von Briesen, who started the first Legal Aid Society, the precursor of hundreds, in the new world and the old, that have helped to bring justice to the poor man.

But there is another field in which the Germans of America have not been so prominent—the field of politics. They have a constitutional incapacity which they will have to overcome, for the sake of democracy. Politics in a democracy is the art of asking for something and getting your neighbors to think they are making you take it. The average German prefers to earn what he gets and to owe no man anything, and this has kept him away from the political grab-bag. But so far as he has gone into politics, he has always been the idealist, the statesman of pure purpose and lofty courage.

Do you know that the original Lincoln man was Gustav Koerner, a bold bad hyphenate—what our whipped curs would call a “professional German”? Do you know that Christian Roselius, a hyphenate of Louisiana, was one man who had the patriotic courage to refuse to sign the Confederate constitution?

Do you know that the first treasurer of the United States was a hyphenated German-American, Hillegas? He served for fourteen years, and helped pull Uncle Sam out of many a hole. Look at his picture on the next ten-dollar bill you hand over to the German Red Cross Fund.

Do you know that the first speaker of the American Congress was a hyphenated German-American,

Muehlenberg? And in our generation the father of Civil Service Reform was that great champion of liberty in two worlds, the dauntless fighter of 1848 and 1861, the sage and statesman, Carl Schurz.

If they have not held so many of the offices, the German-Americans have fought more of the battles of America. In every great conflict they have poured their blood, blood from the Rhine and the Oder, from the Elbe and the Danube, upon the altar of patriotic devotion.

The War of American Independence was largely fought by German soldiers. When Washington called for volunteers, the first to arrive were German sharp-shooters from Berks county. Squads of German-American riflemen tramped six hundred miles from Virginia to Massachusetts to help throw the British out of the American colonies. It seems that they did not succeed in throwing all of them out, and a few more squads should go up to Boston and finish the job.

When a conspiracy against Washington's life was discovered, it became necessary to provide him with a body-guard that could be trusted absolutely. Where was such a body-guard to be found? Where but among the Germans of Berks and Lancaster counties, Pennsylvania? Their captain was Major Bartholomaeus von Heer, a Prussian. If any one had come to George Washington, the friend of Heer and Steuben, and told him it was necessary to crush the Prussians, George Washington would have had the Tory scoundrel locked in the guard-house.

It was not only the hundred and fifty stalwart men of Washington's body-guard that showed how the Germans stood during the War of the Rebellion. When Congress ordered Pennsylvania to furnish six companies, our hyphenated state furnished nine, four

of them entirely German. A German manufacturer furnished most of the cannon and rifles for Washington's army, and when the soldiers were starving nine Germans donated \$100,000 to buy provisions. When Congress was at the point of refusing more money for the purchase of arms, one man got up and said: "I am only a poor ginger-bread baker, but write my name down for two hundred pounds." His name was Christoph Ludwig, and he was a hyphenate. I have often wondered whether he was related to the heroine, Molly Pitcher, who was also a hyphenated American. Molly's maiden name was Marie Ludwig, lest we forget!

The German bakers played a considerable role at that time. Frau Margareta Greider for several months provided the American soldiers with bread, refusing to accept payment, and in addition she subscribed 1500 guineas for the American cause.

To tell of Johann von Kalb, who died at Camden, would require an epic. His death was no less heroic than that of Nathan Hale. "This is nothing," were his last words; "I am dying the death I have longed for. I am dying for a country fighting for justice and liberty." Yet he was only a Barbarian, only a Hun, like Baron von Steuben, who came from the armies of Frederick the Great to drill the armies of Washington. Steuben found at Valley Forge an untrained mob, ready to disband in desperation. Some officers were in gowns made of bedspreads. It took \$400 to buy a pair of boots. Steuben changed all this. From the time when he came upon the scene, there was an American army. At Yorktown the last British army on American soil surrendered to this Prussian. So the Germans drove the British from America. Alas, they have come back and taken Washington! Ah, would that Muehlenberg and

Herkimer, Kalb and Steuben could come back today!

No names in American history shine more radiantly than those of Muehlenberg and Herkimer. See Muehlenberg in his pulpit, preaching his last sermon! "There is a time for praying. But there is also a time for fighting. That time has now come!" He throws off his clerical cassock and beneath it is the uniform of Washington's Continentals. Several hundred members of his congregation enlisted in his regiment.

That other hero, Herkimer, paid with his life for the victory of Oriskany, which sealed the fate of Burgoyne's army. Smoking his pipe and reading the 38th Psalm, his spirit passed into the realm of shadows, to walk beside Leonidas and Winkelried, to sit with Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone, and all the dauntless dead who died that Liberty might live.

Do you know that Armistead, who defended Fort McHenry against the British, was a hyphenated Hessian? But for him it would have been sad mockery to ask with Francis Scott Key,

"Oh, say, does that Star-Spangled Banner still wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

During the Civil War, also, the despised and maligned Hyphenates played a prominent part in the preservation of the Union. As compared with other nationalities, the Germans furnished fifty per cent more than their quota of men to the armies of the North. One German family, the Pennypackers, furnished 88 men, from common soldiers to a major-general. The first volunteers to enlist were the German Turners of Washington. Three days after Lincoln's call, twelve hundred Germans in Cincinnati were ready to march. That was real preparedness! Today preparedness consists in being ready to sell ammunition to the government at a fat profit.

No less than forty-eight Germans rose to the rank of General in the Union armies. Their names are not as familiar as some others, because they did not think that their service entitled them to be kept on the public payroll the remainder of their lives. But there are no more distinguished names than those on this roster:

Gen. Carl Schurz	
Gen. Franz Sigel	
Gen. Adolph von Steinwehr	
Gen. Alexander von Schimmelpfennig	
Gen. Louis Blenker	
Gen. Peter J. Osterhaus	
Gen. George von Schenck	
Gen. Konrad Krez	
Gen. Alban Schoepf	
Gen. Julius Stahel	
Gen. Samuel Peter Heintzelmann	
Gen. J. H. Heintzelmann	
Gen. G. D. Wagner	
Gen. August V. Kautz	
Gen. Hugo Wangelin	
Gen. Galusha Pennypacker	
Gen. Friedrich Hecker	
Gen. Max Weber	
Gen. August Willich	
Gen. Friedrich Salomon	
Gen. Karl Salomon	
Gen. Edward S. Salomon	
Gen. Isaak Wister	
Gen. Heinrich von Bohlen	
Gen. Franz Hassendeubel	
Gen. Louis Zahm	
Gen. Gottfried Weitzel	
Gen. Theodor Schwan	
Gen. Adolph Buschbeck	
Gen. Wilhelm Heine	
Gen. Gustav Kaemmerling	
Gen. Louis von Blessing	
Gen. August Mohr	
Gen. Julius Raith	
Gen. F. C. Winkler	Gen. G. R. Paul
Gen. Johann A. Koltes	Gen. Karl Leopold Mathies
Gen. Hermann Lieb	Gen. Edward S. Meyer
Gen. Alexander von Schrader	Gen. George A. Custer
Gen. William C. Kueffner	Gen. Adolph A. Engelmann
Gen. George W. Mindel	Gen. Joseph Gerhardt
Gen. Felix Salm-Salm	Gen. Hermann Haupt

Forty-eight names—and there are others!

If it had not been for the Germans, both Missouri and Maryland would have been lost to the Union. One-third of the Union armies was of German blood. One man out of every ten was born in Germany. General Robert Lee said, and Mrs. Jeff Davis repeated the sentiment: "Take the Dutch out of the Union army, and we could lick the Yankees easily."

Yet this man Wilson in Washington dares to question the loyalty of the German-Americans! Where were the Wilsons in the great crisis of the Rebellion? Some were too proud to fight. Others were shouldering guns for the Confederacy, shooting down Union soldiers with British bullets! Is it any wonder that Wilson insists we must furnish ammunition to England? He is paying off a family debt.

Let me tell you that if some Gibbon of the future will have to write the Decline and Fall of the United States, there will be no German names in his roll-call of infamy. Germans have cemented with their sweat and their blood the battlements of Liberty's citadel. It was not they that admitted the treacherous island pirates to our gates. Aside from one man, who made the name of Bethlehem a mockery of peace, they were not Germans who sold to our worst enemy the bombs and bayonets to murder our best friend. It was not the Germans in America who stood by smiling while Russia immolated the Jews and Japan strangled China. It was not the Germans in America that sold their birthright for a Carnegie pension or a Rhodes scholarship. It was not the Germans in America who betrayed the plans of the Irish Republic to Britain and sullied their souls with the blood of Dublin's hero band. It was not the Germans in America who spat upon the Declaration of Independ-

ence and cringed before the blood-stained bullies that called Abraham Lincoln an ape!

The German-Americans believe in the hyphen, but they know that the hyphen is a mark of union, not of separation.

Firm as a wall of iron they have ever stood in defense of true Americanism. Still as a rock of granite will they stand, amid the storm of calumny and defamation, to save our country from a new British conquest. Morgan may give John Bull our banks, and he may buy our newspapers, but Justice is mightier than Gold, and Truth defies the slanderous darts of Malice. We can cry with Brutus, that

“We are armed so strong in honesty
That your words pass by us as the idle wind,
Which we respect not!”

And like Armistead at Fort McHenry, like Kichlein at Long Island, like Herkimer at Oriskany, like Quitman at Chapultepec, like Osterhaus on Lookout Mountain, like Schurz and Steinwehr on Cemetery Ridge, like Custer on the Little Big Horn, like Schley at Santiago, like Barbara Frietchie waving her flag before the eyes of traitors, the Germans will be on the firing line in any crisis—not watchfully waiting, but striking hard blows for the honor and glory of our flag and our country, the priceless heritage of liberty, the radiant hope of humanity—that government of the people, by the people, and for the people may not perish from the face of the earth!



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